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190 CHAUFFERED OFFICIALS SHARE PROXMIRE'S 'AWARD'

WASHINGTON (AP) - GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO TRAVEL BY CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN CARS ARE BEING "COOLED AND FAMPHERED" AT A COST TO TAXPAYERS OF \$3.4 MILLION A YEAR, SEN. WILLIAM PROXMIRE, D-WIS., CHARGED TODAY.

"ONLY A HANDFUL OF FEDERAL OFFICIALS ARE SPECIFICALLY GIVEN THE AUTHORITY UNDER LAW TO ENJOY HOME-TO-WORK CHAUFFEURING," PROXMIRE SAID. "BUT MY SURVEY OF FEDERAL AGENCIES DEMONSTRATES THAT THE LACK OF LEGAL AUTHORITY HAS NOT STOPPED SCORES OF FEDERAL OFFICIALS FROM HOPPING INTO THE BACKSEAT."

PROXMIRE, A PHYSICAL FITNESS ADVOCATE WHO RUNS TO WORK EVERY DAY, AWARDED HIS "GOLDEN FLEECE" FOR SEPTEMBER TO THE 190 FEDERAL OFFICIALS WHO USE CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN CARS. THE AWARD IS INTENDED TO SINGLE OUT WASTEFUL GOVERNMENT SPENDING.

THE LIST IS HEADED BY PRESIDENT REAGAN. BUT PROXMIRE NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT IS SPECIFICALLY ENTITLED BY LAW TO USE OF A CHAUFFEUR AT ALL TIMES.

BUT HE SAID THE LAW LIMITS USE OF CHAUFFEURS FOR MOST OTHERS TO OFFICIAL BUSINESS. THAT SHOULDN'T INCLUDE GOING BACK AND FORTH TO WORK, PROXMIRE ASSERTED.

"AT AN ANNUAL AVERAGE COST OF \$32,000 FOR THIS PERSONAL CONVENIENCE, THE AMERICAN TAXPAYERS ARE BEING BILLED ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THESE BUREAUCRATS WITH OVER 5,000 ROUNDTRIP RIDES IN A TAXICAB FROM CAPITOL HILL TO GEORGETOWN EACH AND EVERY YEAR," HE SAID. GEORGETOWN IS ONE OF THE MOST FASHIONABLE NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL.

PROXMIRE IS SPONSORING A BILL TO SPECIFICALLY DENY FUNDS FOR CHAUFFEURS FOR COMMUTING PURPOSES EXCEPT IN EMERGENCIES.

PROXMIRE SAID THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IS THE WORST OFFENDER, PROVIDING 60 OFFICIALS WITH CHAUFFEUR SERVICE. THE FIGURE INCLUDES 48 WHO ARE GRANTED THE PRIVILEGE ON AN EXCEPTIONAL BASIS AND 12 ON A REGULAR BASIS.

HE ADDED THAT THE CIA SPENDS \$26,000 A YEAR IN OVERTIME PAY FOR DIRECTOR WILLIAM CASEY'S CHAUFFEUR. THAT IS IN ADDITION TO THE DRIVER'S REGULAR SALARY OF \$20,000.